

**BOARD OF HEALTH PROFESISONS
REGULATORY RESEARCH COMMITTEE
PUBLIC HEARING ON EMERGING PROFESSIONS
January 11, 2010**

TIME AND PLACE: The public hearing was called to order at 9:05 a.m. at the Department of Health Professions. The purpose for the hearing was to receive public comment pursuant to its study into the need to regulate the emerging profession: Community Health Workers.

PRESIDING CHAIR: Damien Howell, P.T.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Billie Watson Hughes

STAFF PRESENT: Elizabeth A. Carter, Ph.D., Executive Director, Board of Health Professions
Justin Crow, Research Assistant
Laura Chapman, Operations Manager

OTHERS PRESENT: Becky Bowers Lanier
Christopher Nye
Julie Milodeau
Karen Rheuban
Gary Race
Debra Riggs
Marilyn Metzler
Lisa Specter-Dunaway

COURT REPORTER: Beth Aliff, Farnsworth & Taylor Reporting, LLC

PUBLIC COMMENT: Becky Bowers Lanier spoke on behalf of Chelsea Savage, Chair of the Legislative Coalition of Virginia Nurses who was unable to attend. She has reviewed material presented by Catherine Bodkin and Ted Garson. She believes that their presentation speaks to the practice of community health workers now and possibly into the future with expansion of their roles that they presently perform. There is currently insufficient data on practice in residents' homes to explore whether their practice poses a risk of harm to the public if they remain unregulated. Their practice appears to be autonomous. There may be a need to regulate these individuals. The Legislative Coalition of

Virginia Nurses recommends that the Board of Health Professions continue to study the current projected practice of community health workers to determine whether these individuals need to be regulated and if so at what level.

Christopher Nye, Executive Director of the Harrisonburg Community Center and an Associate Director of James Madison University Institute for Innovation in Health and Human Services. House Joint Resolution 195 of the 2004 Virginia General Assembly directed James Madison University to study the impact and utilization of community health workers in Virginia. In January 2006, the final report was submitted to the general assembly. The report listed seven (7) recommendations designed to maximize the unique value of community health workers within Virginia's health care work force. As the Board continues to examine the roles of community health workers he stated that the hope is that its actions will ensure the recognition and growth of this segment of our healthcare work force, its important contributions and the problems of community health workers to reach vulnerable populations of Virginia.

Julie Bilodeau, Director of CrossOver Ministry and Marilyn Metzler, Director of Patient Education. We are a free clinic located in Richmond, VA, providing health education and medical services to low income uninsured. The risk of credentialing all community health workers is that it would create barriers for individuals willing to serve in our adverse communities. Requiring credentialing of all community health workers also raises the risk of undermining the true spirit of volunteerism that we believe our society needs.

Dr. Karen Rheuban, Pediatrician and Senior Associate Dean for Continuing Education and External Affairs and Medical Director of Howard Medical at the University of Virginia, representing Dr. Arthur Garson who is out of the country. Dr. Rheuban indicated that a study into the feasibility of certifying community health workers in the Commonwealth of Virginia is both timely and important. She stated that certification of community health workers will serve to ensure a sustainable high quality community health worker infrastructure with requisite continuing

education. She stated that certification will ensure employment opportunities in models designed to enhance access to quality health care and improve the health of the citizens of the Commonwealth.

Lisa Specter-Dunaway, CEO of CHIP of Virginia, Comprehensive Health Investment Project. Ms. Specter-Dunaway described pairing registered nurses with community health workers and work with low-income pregnant women and those at-risk when the child is under six (6). We believe it is important to study the certification of community health workers in looking at the risks of harm that could be posed by unregulated practice. Ms. Specter-Dunaway stated that community health workers are playing increasingly important roles in the health and human service delivery system and their use is multiplying. Without formal regulation, violation of HIPAA and FERPA laws may occur more frequently resulting in harm to the public and liability to the organizations that utilize community health workers in their work with the public. Independent regulation of the role may be the most effective method of ensuring appropriate protection for the public and for the public and private entities that utilize them. She stated that they would like to have Medicaid reimbursement for training and programs, but she stressed care not to overburden agencies that are already struggling for survival.

Mr. Howell informed the public that the deadline to submit written comment is January 31, 2010.

The public hearing transcript will be incorporated into the minutes as Attachment 1.

ADJOURNMENT:

The public hearing adjourned at 9:35 a.m.

Damien Howell, P.T.
Chair

Elizabeth A. Carter, Ph.D. Executive Director
Board of Health Professions